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TERRORISTS NEGOTIATE IN SWITZERLAND

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FOREWORD

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TERRORISTS NEGOTIATE IN SWITZERLAND

[Following is a translation of an unsigned article in Die Woche (The Week), No 11, 13 March 1960, Pages 1-5.]

Where? -- The two opposing organizations say: near Liechtenstein, but...

Did our Federal Police know about the secret meeting between the delegates of the French "Red Hand" and the Algerian FLN?

Our readers will recall a report entitled "The Red Hand" by Gaston Defresne, which appeared in No 40-42 of Die Woche. It dealt with the brutal war between the traders, who deliver arms and ammunition to the army of the Algerian rebels (FLN), and the agents of the "Red Hand," that organization of French counterterrorists who want to make short shrift of these arms merchants. Since then, the list of victims of the "Red Hand" has grown longer. Twelve people have lost their lives, including children killed "by mistake." In view of the fanaticism with which the Algerian FLN and the "Red Hand" are fighting each other, the report that representatives of these two forces had met "somewhere in Central Europe" came as quite a surprise. But when we, as the only paper in Switzerland, received pictures of this meeting, in addition to an "unofficial" report, there was no doubt left, except one: did the meeting really take place "near Liechtenstein," as our informants stated? We decided to look into this matter.

Napoleon with SS Badge

The names of the real chiefs of the "Red Hand" are still unknown. The infamous Colonel Marnier, Jean Viari, Pedro, and others are only executive organs. Behind them is a committee of seven members and one chairman, who left the army out of indignation against the policy of the French government. No one knows the names of these people. The organization is known by the name "Red Hand" only in Germany. In France, it is called "Catena" (from the Latin word for "chain"). It sprang up in 1945 in the bosom of the French occupation army in Germany, where it originally devoted its activities to the combatting of communist cell formation; not until later did it become the secret service of the right-wing extremists. Roger Durieux is said to be the contact man between the Catena leaders in France and the Catena agents in Central Europe.

This fellow Durieux, called Christian by his cohorts, used to be a member of the French secret police and is proud of his rather remote resemblance to Emperor Napoleon. He played the lead in the affair that is supposed to have taken place "in the vicinity of Liechtenstein."

What They Would Have Us Believe

Now, what actually was involved in all this? To make a long story short, here it is: Roger Durieux, the go-between of the "Red Hand," met his mortal enemy Malek, the delegate of the "Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic" (FLN) in Europe. A strange meeting, this, if we consider that Malek's predecessor Ait Ahcene had been murdered by Durieux' accomplices. How this meeting came about is related in an "official" report which we received together with the photos reproduced on these pages. The report says: "The meeting between Durieux and Malek took place after a wild chase in a small Central European village near Liechtenstein, on Sunday, 21 February. The police authorities of Germany and other neighboring countries did everything in order to foil this meeting, and one could see how high security officials were shadowed by their opposite numbers from the security services of the neighboring countries. Twice during the same night, the negotiators changed hotels; at dawn, they drove over icy mountain roads and headed for a meeting place which again and again was changed at the last moment. The police of the FLN was worried about the safety of its chief Malek. Malek's press secretary Mouloud Kassim, the "dead man on vacation" (so called because he is No 1 on the gun-down list of the "Red Hand"), accompanied him, together with a security officer of the FLN.

Short, dark-haired, with an SS badge under his lapel, Durieux sat facing the self-confident and calm Malik and the amiable, shy Kassim. His statements were quite superficial: "I am first of all an Algerian, for I was born in Algeria... France and Algeria must maintain their cultural and economic relations... Algeria belongs as little to France as to Germany -- it is nothing but an extension of Europe into Africa." "But why did you organize these attacks on people?" asked Malek. "These attacks did us more good than years of propaganda."

"Well, it's too bad we failed," replied Durieux.

The report continues in this vein. There are fragments of a dialogue that does not make sense; certainly, the two emissaries had more important things to talk about than such meaningless trivia. It would be interesting both for France and for Algeria to find out why these two mortal enemies met in the first place. Was this short armistice supposed to inaugurate more official negotiations between the "Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic" and the French government?

But what interests us Swiss even more is the meaning of the phrase "in the vicinity of Liechtenstein," which is contained in the "official" report. Switzerland, too, borders on Liechtenstein.

The Editorial Staff Does Some Sleuthing

The more we studied the photos accompanying the text, the less we could believe this fiction about Liechtenstein.

Die Woche picked up the trail of the terrorists in Switzerland.

Actual Site of Negotiations: Payerne

First of all, we noticed that the gentlemen, among other drinks, had bottles of "Biere du Cardinal" in front of them on the restaurant table. This Freiburg beer is sold mostly in western Switzerland and more rarely in the remaining sections of our country. Then we found that there were too many French signs posted all over the place, considering that this was supposed to be a Liechtenstein village. In front of the restaurant, one can see again "Biere du Cardinal," "Sinalco" with French advertising copy, the monthly TV program "Programme romand" for February 1960, and a TCS [Swiss Touring Club] plaque, likewise in French.

The restaurant, where the FLN and "Red Hand" met, could be located neither in the neighboring principality [of Liechtenstein], nor in the "Deutsche Schweiz" [Germany's Swiss section]. It is rather in the area around Freiburg.

Studying a photo showing Mr. Malek eating a sandwich, we were puzzled by something. The edge of the plate is decorated with a white and dark parted coat of arms with an illegible motto over it, and a name under it, probably the village. We can barely make out the first three letters: PAY. Is it Pays? No, it must be a longer word. A glance at the phone directory brings us closer to our target: there is only one locality that starts with "Pay" -- and that is Payerne. And the coat of arms of Payerne is indeed "parted red and white," to use the language of heraldry.

Now, it is not to be assumed that the terrorists were looking at the ancient Romanesque basilica, but that they wanted to resume their discussion as fast as possible and looked for a restaurant near the railroad station. In Payerne, we have three restaurants: the "de la Gare" or station coffee shop, the Cafe de la Gare, and the Hotel de la Gare. When we drove to Payerne on the next day and got out in front of the Hotel de la Gare, we immediately recognized the facade again, which we had seen in one of the photos. "Cardinal," "Touring-Club Suisse," "Sinalco," and the TV posters -- it was all there.

The hotel owner, Mr. Hermann Schmutz, recalled the eight-man party which came in one Sunday morning and "talked just about all languages." Since the restaurants are closed in Payerne on Sunday morning on account of religious services, the gentlemen had first gone to the station coffee shop; but the place was too crowded; therefore

the gentlemen asked Mr. Schmutz to let them into the hotel "because they had some very important things to discuss." Mr. Schmutz let them in reluctantly and the party of eight settled down in the bar, which is way in the back, "so that they could not be seen from the outside." They stayed there for 4 hours and then drove off in two cars.

Earlier, we asked our Federal Police whether they knew anything about this secret meeting between the delegates of the "Red Hand" and the FLN. This was not intended as a provocation, but merely as an objective question and as a hint. We in Switzerland are proud of the fact that we do not live in a police state and we do not blame the police authorities if they do not always happen to know exactly who crosses the frontiers of our country. We have no visa requirements in passenger traffic with neighboring countries, and that of course makes it more difficult to check on people. Anyone who is not sought by Interpol, who does not commit any crimes in Switzerland, and who does not engage in political activities here for another power, can enter our country without trouble. But we strongly suspect that the gentlemen in Payerne did something that comes under the heading of "political activity." But if this activity contributed to an armistice in the cruel terrorist war between the two organizations on European soil -- why, then, that is all right with us.

FIGURE APPENDIX

[Page 2 of original, top] The first contact between the opposing agents is said to have been quite cool. The tension did not ease until Roger Durieux (center), the delegate of the "Red Hand," went into his "Napoleon on St. Helena" act. On the left, the delegate of the FLN government in Europe, Malek; right, Malek's press secretary Mouloud Kassim; in the foreground, an editor of the German news magazine Der Spiegel [The Mirror], who is supposed to have urged this meeting. The badge below Durieux' breast pocket is none other than the golden eagle of the Waffen-SS over the swastika...

[Page 2, bottom] Armistice at the restaurant table. The second gentleman from the right (Durieux), behind the table, had the predecessor of the second gentleman from left (Malek) assassinated 16 months ago, but they forgot their feud for one day. The talks, which they intend to hold after lunch, are to be recorded on tape. The tape recorder can be seen on the little table in the background.

[Page 3 of original] The "Red Hand" in person: Roger Durieux, alias Christian. He is not the top man in this organization (that man is unknown), but he represents the organization on the outside in a rather official capacity, especially in talks across the front lines, such as, for instance, in the meeting with the chief of the FLN in Europe; Die Woche is the first Swiss newspaper to report on this meeting.

Photos by Jean-Paul Pradier

[Page 4 of original, top] According to the caption accompanying this photo, the European FLN chief Malek (left) is supposed to have asked his opponent Dureiux: "What was your first hatchet job?" The delegate of the "Red Hand" could not recall who his first victim had been. We were able to establish the meeting place with the help of a similar photo which we cannot publish today because of certain specific reasons (we shall publish it later on). On the plate edge, concealed by the knife, the word "Payerne."

[Page 4 of original, bottom] Durieux listed the various attacks on arms traders and (according to the not too reliable accompanying caption) is supposed to have said: "I assure you that I had nothing to do with the first attempt on the life of the (German arms merchant) Schlueter. I was not in Germany at the time. As for the second attempt, well, that is something else again..." In this photo, we are interested mainly in the beer bottle, which helped us unmask the Liechtenstein camouflage maneuver and the place, the site of the meeting in western Switzerland.

[Page 4 of original, right] The ice seems to have melted. The negotiators, in good spirits, are shown leaving the restaurant which, however, is not "in the vicinity of Liechtenstein," as the caption states, but in Payerne.

[Page 5 of original, top, left] Mr. Hermann Schmutz, owner of the "Hotel de la Gare" in Payerne, allowed us to inspect the bar where the negotiators held their meeting. He had no idea who they were and acted quite surprised when we informed him that the gentlemen, whom he could identify by the pictures, were delegates of the FLN and the "Red Hand." The opposing parties are finally getting together.

[Page 5, top, right] Miss Therese Donzallanz waited on the delegates. She noted that the gentlemen stood around in the bar in two separate groups for quite some time before they sat down at some tables that had been pushed together. They had sandwiches; as she served the orders, three of the gentlemen asked her to take out the ham and substitute eggs. The same three customers did not order any alcoholic beverages, but contented themselves with mineral water, coffee, or tea, while the rest of the party drank whisky or beer. The teetotalers were the three Algerian FLN delegates, whom the Koran forbids to eat pork and drink liquor. Miss Donzallanz recalled that the party consumed quite a bit. The tab was picked up by the "German-speaking gentleman." That was Mr. Engelmann, most likely; he is the editor of Der Spiegel, who is said to have brought this meeting about.

[Page 5 of original, bottom, left] The bar of the Hotel de la Gare in Payerne, where the strange meeting between the "Red Hand" and the FLN took place.

Photos by Fernand Rausser